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BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

THE HUT

Price, 35 Cents



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BOSTON

WIGS

AND OTHER HAIR GOODS

WHISKERS AND MUSTACHES

State Color Wanted on Hair Goods.

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WALTER H. BAKER CO., Boston, Mass.

The Hut

A Comedy in Three Acts

By

FANNIE BARNETT LINSKY

Author of "Patsy," "Forest Acres," etc., etc.



BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

1922

The Hut

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CHARACTERS

MACGREGOR SPILLANE, *Proprietor of "The Hut."*

JOHN RAND,

JAMES LODGE,

HALLAM CARLETON, } *Guests at "The Hut."*

SIMON SEMPLE,

LAWRENCE ORME,

ABNER, *the chore boy.*

GRIMES, *Semple's chauffeur.*

DICKY, *Orme's son.*

MCKINNON, } *detective officers.*

LANE,

TIME.—Present.

SCENE.—The living-room of "The Hut"; a country Health and Rest Retreat for the tired business man.

ACT I.—Late afternoon in October. Pajamas \$5.00.

ACT II.—The next day. The gift of the storm. Scene 1, morning. Scene 2, late evening.

ACT III.—Two days later. The Governor takes a hand.



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AUG -4 1922

G.W.B. 8/9/22

STAGE SETTING AND PROPERTIES

SCENERY

The room should be furnished with modern furniture suited to a lounging room for men. A piano, a table with magazines, some smokers' articles, comfortable easy chairs and foot rests, scattered about where convenient. A gate-leg table should rest in one corner, which is brought to c. for meal. Pillows, lamps, etc.

There should be exits at L. and R., and a door at Rear which looks out to grounds. If possible, have as much of outdoor scene as can be seen through door, visible to audience, showing a road, trees, etc. A window, also at Rear, through which light of a full moon shines into the room. Another window at R., near back, where RAND and MAC look out when shots are heard.

An open fireplace with logs burning will add greatly to the scene. Some logs, andirons and a fire screen, if possible.

Autumn leaves or flowers in bowls, for decoration. An attractive room.

PROPERTIES

A set of oilskins for MAC. A suitcase filled with feminine silk lingerie. An old-fashioned gold locket for RAND. A small hip pocket bottle, presumably filled with whiskey, for SEMPLE.

The revolver shots, being fired off stage, may be achieved in any convenient way.

All kinds of fishing tackle, poles, lines, hooks, pails, etc.

Some tennis rackets, a football, and any other necessities for athletic sports.

A pair of men's pajamas, rumpled and unironed. A "stage" five-dollar bill.

An auto horn, and any device to make the sound of starting the engine of a car.

Dishes and silver to lay properly the table for a meal. A tray or basket to carry them in. A table-cloth and napkins.

A string of pearls and a pin, presumably set with diamonds.

An outfit for a game of checkers.

A corn popper, a lantern, and a pair of handcuffs.

Two china eggs.

Any convenient arrangement of red lights may be used to show the light in the fireplace and the bonfire. Latter occurs off at some distance from stage, and can be very easily represented by having papers kept burning in some large receptacle.

It would add greatly to the general effectiveness of the play if one, or even two, dogs could be introduced. One, an old dog, could represent the "Scottie" of the play. The other, a young and frisky animal, could be put through any number of tricks, and be a general companion and playfellow of the guests.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

COSTUMES

All the characters should wear costumes suited to "roughing it" in the country. Gray flannel shirts and khaki trousers are suggested, with sweaters and caps for outdoors. The costumes remain the same throughout the play, the single exception being in the first act. SEMPLE, on his arrival at "The Hut," should be dressed in regulation attire for a city business man, and should be wrapped as well in several extra auto robes and blankets. GRIMES should wear a regulation chauffeur's costume. Both appear later, however, in the same sort of outfit as the others, presumably borrowed.

In the last act, DICKY and the DETECTIVES wear regulation men's clothes.

CHARACTERISTICS

MAC. Should be a Scotchman, slow and deliberate in manner. A man past middle age, kindly, but taciturn. Slight Scotch accent if desired.

RAND. Should be a fine looking man, still young, who shows that he is used to authority and capable of exercising it. A successful lawyer and executive.

SEMPLE. A man of wealth, quick, nervous, irascible. Long-headed, but short-tempered. Sharp and impatient, but good-hearted. A man over forty.

ORME. Shrewd and keen, as befits a detective of long experience. Inclined to be a little stern and harsh in manner. A man who takes his own trouble very much to heart. Of middle age.

LODGE AND CARLETON. Good-looking, clean cut youths in the early twenties. Carleton, if possible, to look rather delicate in health. Lodge, to be full of life and "pep."

DICKY. The average youth of nineteen of the present time. Should be as nearly as possible of the same height and general build as Grimes.

GRIMES. A chauffeur who allows himself to be bullied by his employer. He should act as though afraid of Semple, but very much attached to Rand.

ABNER. A slow-witted, faithful plodding chore-boy, absolutely devoted to Mac.

THE VOICE. Since this voice is only heard off stage it may be any member of the company simulating the voice of an old darky woman. Since the arm is shown to the audience, it will be necessary to have some one black up one arm for this purpose. Any one of the company not on stage at these times may play the part.

The Hut

ACT I

SCENE.—*The living-room of "The Hut."*

(*The curtain rises on ORME, asleep in an armchair.*

CARLETON *whittling and whistling or playing with dog.* Enter JAMES LODGE *with fishing implements.*)

LODGE. Hi! Hal! (*Puts things down. Sees ORME.*)
Gee! Our friend certainly believes in the rest cure, all right. Seems to me he sleeps twenty-three hours out of twenty-four.

CARLETON. Well, that's what he's here for. Did you have any luck?

LODGE. You bet! Got a couple of beauties. I'd rather take my rest cure figuring it out with a couple of these down by the bank (*Holds up fish.*) than to sleep my brains away like that. (*Nods at sleeper.*)

CARL. Every one to his own taste, my boy, as we are told the lady said when she kissed the cow. And, say, do you know (*Lowering his voice.*), somehow, he seems queer to me. I don't think he rests much, for all his sleeping. I'll bet you a trout hook against a couple of flies that that old chap's got something on his mind that's worrying him.

LODGE. I don't know but what you're right, Hal. You usually are pretty quick at sizing up a situation. (*Busies himself with line, hooks, tackle, etc.*) What do you suppose it is?

CARL. Oh, Heaven knows. Might be any one of a

hundred things. Who can tell? Money, family troubles, business worries, disappointment in love, lots of things that it might be.

LODGE (*slowly*). Nope. He looks too old for a disappointment in love.

CARL. Well, you know, the older they get the harder they fall.

LODGE. Yes, I know, that's what they say. But it's not so. God knows, no one ever fell harder than I did—and what did it get me—no—I guess I'm the only one of Spillane's guests that's here to try and mend a broken heart.

CARL. Sh—sh—shsh! Not so loud. The old boy might hear you. Besides, Jim, you know what I've told you. Hearts don't break so quickly nowadays and you mustn't give up so easily. You may win out yet.

LODGE. Yes. That sounds fine, I know. I used to kid myself along like that a while back, but I'm all through with that stuff now. Say (*Becomes excited and raises his voice.*), now I ask you, Hal, what right have I got to even ask a girl with a bank —

(ORME rouses. *Lets paper fall. Slowly wakens.*)

ORME. Um-Um—Hm—Um! Yes, yes, of course. Certainly. I believe I must have fallen asleep over the paper. Hope I haven't disturbed you gentlemen.

CARL. Disturbed us! Oh, dear no. To tell the truth, we were both so tired that it was only your snoring that kept us awake.

ORME (*sitting up*). Snoring! Snoring! God bless my soul, man, no one ever told me that I snored. Are you sure?

LODGE. Don't you mind him, Mr. Orme, he's only kidding you. I've been in here for quite a while and I never heard you snore once.

ORME. Oh, thanks, my boy, thanks. Now you've restored some of my self-respect. I never had much patience with a snorer—nor with a sleepy-head either, for that matter.

LODGE. You should have been down by the brook with

me, Mr. Orme. It was too nice a day to waste indoors sleeping. Mac'll get after you if he finds it out. Look! (*Holds up fish.*) These gentlemen keep you much too busy to think of sleep or anything else, for that matter.

ORME. Well, then I certainly should go after them, for the very thing I came up here for was, just that—to find something that would stop me from thinking for a while. (*There is a silence for a moment, then ORME sighs audibly.*) Well, I mustn't burden you youngsters with an old man's grumbings. By the way, where is our amiable host and boss, Mr. MacGregor Spillane?

CARL. Oh, he hitched up his Rolls Royce and went down to the station to meet the next arrival.

ORME. Ha. That so? Who's coming now?

LODGE. Say, ask us something easy. Did you ever know Mr. MacGregor Spillane to open his head to any one of his gang to tell 'em a word about any one else who was, is, or intends to be a member?

CARL. I surely never did. He's a pretty close-mouthed old duffer, but he's a little bit of all right, Mac is, just the same.

ORME. I agree with you there, Carleton, and perhaps the fact that he is so careful about other people's affairs is what has helped to make this place as popular and successful as it is.

LODGE. Say, by the way, where's the new man that came this morning? I haven't seen him around very much.

CARL. He went down to the station with Mac. Say, Jim, do you know that this new chap—Rand, wasn't it, Mr. Orme—you met him.

ORME. Yes. Mr. John Rand was the name Mac gave when he introduced me.

CARL. Well, his face looks kind of familiar to me, do you know it, Jim? Seems as though I'd seen him somewhere.

LODGE. Well, maybe you have. You'll have to get real chummy with him over the wood-pile to-morrow morning and then maybe you'll recollect where you last met him.

ORME. I thought him a very fine looking man—one of

the kind that might be expected to be a very successful business man.

CARL. That's right! I thought the same thing. Kind of a chap who looks as though he had lots of authority, and knew how to use it. But I wonder where I've seen him before. Well, it'll come to me, I suppose, but, say, this isn't getting these fish ready for supper, Jim—I suppose they're for supper, eh?

LODGE. What—yes—oh, yes—I suppose so. I did think at first that if I got any real big ones, that I'd pack 'em and send 'em off—down home—but—no—I guess not. Come on, Hal, we'll get 'em all fixed up and cook 'em in honor of the new arrivals.

(He picks up pail and goes toward door. An auto horn sounds outside. He opens door quickly and collides forcibly with man just about to enter. LODGE backs into room; the other stands in doorway, bundled up in several layers of robes. They stare at each other.)

SEMPLE (*angrily*). Who the devil are you, sir?

LODGE (*ruefully rubbing bump on his forehead*). Permit me to return your compliment—Who the hell are you? (*ORME and CARLETON laugh.*)

SEMPLE (*angrily*). I—I—I am Simon Semple, sir, and I've been riding round this beastly country with that fool chauffeur of mine since eleven o'clock this morning looking for a place called "Spillane's."

CARL. Well, you've found it. Won't you take off some of your extra wraps and stay a while?

SEMPLE. Found it! Found it! Is this it? This!

CARL. Sure. This is "it"—known in polite language as "The Hut," the place where the tired business man shakes his tired feeling, lives the simple life and communes with Nature; alternately bossed, bullied, and buncoed by one Mr. MacGregor Spillane.

SEMPLE. Well, thank Heaven, I'm here. I'm nearly frozen. I've been as close to Nature as I want to get for some time. (*Begins taking off some "layers," grumbling*

'all the time.) That fool chauffeur, the blooming idiot, etc.

LODGE (*sarcastically, still rubbing*). Well, since you've done me the honor to tell me your name, permit me to do the "pretty" for the house. (*Introduces all.*) Mr. Simon Semple; Mr. Lawrence Orme; Mr. Hallam Carleton, and your humble servant, James Lodge.

SEMPLÉ. Hem, a-hem. Glad to know you all, I'm sure. I'm so blooming cold my teeth are chattering. Got anything here to warm me up?

ORME (*giving him a sharp look*). No—er—that is, yes. We've got a few more logs outside in the woodpile. But I guess——

SEMPLÉ. Oh, Lord, I didn't mean anything like that. I meant——

LODGE. You don't have to tell us in seven different languages what you meant, Mr. Semple. We weren't any of us born yesterday. But you probably don't know that the stuff you mention is absolutely forbidden here, even as medicine. I'd as soon wave a red flag in front of an angry bull as to let Mac see a bottle of Hootch in "The Hut."

SEMPLÉ (*testily*). Well, forbidden or not, I've got to have something to warm me up.

CARL. I could make you some hot tea. I'm quite an expert.

SEMPLÉ (*in disgust*). Tea! Man, I'm not sick! I'm only cold! (*Goes to door.*) Where is that idiot of a driver? Hey there, Grimes. Come in here with my bags. Hurry up. Bring the small black bag especially. And be quick about it.

GRIMES (*outside, shouts*). Is this the right place, sir?

SEMPLÉ (*yells*). Yes, yes, confound you. Don't stop to ask questions. Of course this is the place. (*Turns to others.*) Thank Heaven it is—I don't think I could have stood five minutes more of this infernal country.

GRIMES (*at door*). Here you are, sir. Here's the black one. What shall I do now, sir?

SEMPLÉ (*goes to door; takes bag*). Do now, you idiot—what do you suppose you're to do—find the garage, of course, and put the car in it. Then come back here

for orders, and bring my other case with you when you come. I mean the one with my things in it. I'll keep it here till I find out where my quarters are to be. (*Others exchange amused glances. SEMPLE comes to C. with small black grip. Business of opening and extracting brushes, razors, etc., in an effort to find small bottle of liquor. Finally holds up bottle with evident pride.*) Well, gentlemen, this is some of the real old stuff. Will you join me?

(*All decline. He drinks, and puts the bottle away.*)

LODGE. Mac doesn't stand for anything like that up here. The only kind of warming up that he allows is a swing at the wood-pile of a morning, or a few extra setting-up exercises.

SEMPLE. Exercises! Ugh! I hate 'em. I came out here for a rest. (*Rubs his hands, clears his throat, and seems more cheerful after the drink.*) And, by Gosh! I need it! I sent my wife and niece off to Atlantic City by themselves so I wouldn't have to listen to any more of their foolish chatter about "love affairs" and "the latest lines from Paris." Ugh! These women!

CARL. Well, there'll be none of them round here to bother you. Not a woman on the place except old Jinny, who does the wash, and she never shows her face beyond that door.

LODGE. No, and if she did, it would probably scare you, it's so black.

ORME. Well, she's a good-natured darky for all that. I wrapped a couple of my good linen handkerchiefs around a trout the other day when I was trying to get the hook out, and of course they got all stained up. Then I gave them to Jinny to wash, and she called me over this morning and presented me with an armful of rags, and wanted to know "if I thought the fish's feelings wouldn't be hurt, would I please use these the next time."

CARL (*laughing*). Well, surely, Jinny doesn't lack a sense of humor.

SEMPLE. You fellows seem to have a pretty good time up here. I take it you like the place.

LODGE. Best ever! You'll think so, too, before you've been here forty-eight hours.

ORME. The old crowd comes back year after year. I guess that's the acid test for a place like this. And Mac Spillane's the "Salt of the Earth."

CARL. So say I.

LODGE. And so say I.

SEMPLE. But, say now, I'm forgetting all about him. Where is my host? This is my first trip up here. I haven't even seen him.

LODGE. Why, he's gone down to the station to meet a new arrival.

CARL. By Jove, it must be you he's gone to meet. Did you let him know you were coming up by machine?

SEMPLE. Let him know? Of course I didn't. I left early this morning. I expected to be here hours before he'd even be thinking of going down to the train. But there isn't a decent automobile road within twenty miles of this place. Your friend can't be much of a business man or he'd get the town to improve the roads around here, and boom his place up a bit.

ORME. Well, that's just what he doesn't want to do. He doesn't lack for guests, either, Mr. Semple, but he doesn't want any of your buzz-wagons round the place.

LODGE. That's right, Mr. Semple. Didn't I tell you this is where you lead the simple life?

ORME. Thank goodness, Mac knows enough not to wait around too long for any train. Besides, he's got Mr. Rand with him, so he'll not lack for company. I'll show you where the pump is, Mr. Semple, if you want to wash up a bit.

SEMPLE. Wash up—well, I guess I need to. That reminds me. Where's that fool chauffeur of mine with my grip? I tell you, fellows, when I watched that idiot walking down the path from my front door this morning with my niece's suitcase in one hand and mine in the other, I patted myself on the back, and promised myself a real vacation for once in my life. Gad! I'm all nerves.

GRIMES (*at door*). Here's your luggage, sir. (*Comes in.*) And hang it all, sir, if I can find anything that looks

like a garage within two miles of this place. There's nothing but an old wagon shed back of the house.

SEMPLE. Bah! You must be getting blind.

ORME. No, don't blame your man, Semple. He's right. There isn't any garage, for the simple reason that Mac doesn't allow any cars up here. He took it for granted that you knew, I suppose. You see, it's "Back to Nature" for fair. We fellows all know about it, of course; we've been here so often.

SEMPLE (*amazed*). No machines! Good Lord! How do you get anywhere?

LODGE. We don't! And when we do—we walk.

SEMPLE. Bah! I hate to walk.

CARL. Besides, there ain't nowheres to "get"! The nearest place is about seven miles from here.

SEMPLE. Seven miles—no autos—Good Heavens—what kind of a place is this anyway! I suppose you have a telephone?

CARL. Well, there is one, but we can't use it. It's locked up in Mac's Sanctum Sanctorum, his private office over on the other lot. Mac gets all the messages first—then, if he thinks it wise—or necessary—he passes them on.

SEMPLE. Say, who does he think he is around here—the German Kaiser? I figured that I was coming to a place where I could do as I pleased. I've had enough bossing to suit me for a while. I don't know—I don't believe this is the kind —

LODGE. Oh, it isn't as bad as it sounds, Mr. Semple. You'll be crazy about it in a couple of days. Every one is that comes here.

CARL. Of course you will. You see, Mac doesn't want cars and telephones and all that sort of thing, because he wants his men to leave all cares and worries behind them. Cut loose from all the things they regularly do, and just come up here and be "kids" all over again.

SEMPLE. Well, maybe he's got the right idea, but it sounds kind of strange to me—but, say, I've got a flannel shirt and a pair of khaki trousers in my grip—maybe if I get into them I'll feel more at home here.

ORME. That's a good idea. You can change in my bunk and then we'll wash up and these lads can broil the fish they've just promised me for my supper.

SEMPLE. Open the case, Grimes. I just feel like seeing myself all dressed up in what's packed in that grip. It's been a long time—— (*GRIMES meantime opens case, fumbling with lock. SEMPLÉ stands over him.*) Well—I'll be—hanged. You blooming idiot. What the devil do you mean by making a fool of me like that? (*Scoops up an armful of feminine silk "undies" and holds them out in disgust.*) Ever see a flannel shirt that looked like that (*Shakes out crêpe de chine "combination."*) or a pair of khaki trousers like this (*Waves a pair of silk knickers.*), or a suit of pajamas like this? (*Unfurls a silk "nighty." Stops as a thought strikes him.*) Pajamas! Great Cæsar's ghost! What am I going to do up in a wilderness like this without even a pair of pajamas? (*Walks up and down in rage.*)

CARL. Oh, well, I wouldn't let it upset me like that, Mr. Semple. I guess we can fix you up all right.

SEMPLE. Much obliged—but bah! I hate borrowed stuff. I'd just as soon borrow a man's pajamas as—as—his——

LODGE (*hopefully*). Tooth brush?

SEMPLE (*raging*). Yes, sir—as his tooth brush, and by Gad, I'm not going to either. (*Drops stuff back into case and gives the case a kick. Puts hand in pocket and extracts a bill. Thrusts it forcibly at GRIMES. GRIMES backs a few steps.*) There, you blooming idiot. Take that, and take that machine, and go, and don't come back here till you've got me a pair of pajamas somewhere.

GRIMES (*apologetically*). But, Mr. Semple, sir, there ain't no stores—nowhere around here. Don't you know how we looked for one on the way up?

SEMPLE. Know! Know! I don't know anything, and you know less. There's five dollars. Now git! And don't you come back without those pajamas if you have to beg, borrow or steal 'em. Git!

(*GRIMES opens mouth several times, as if to speak. Closes it again. Goes out shaking head dubiously.*)

Noise of engine starting, honk of horn, sound of departing auto. SEMPLE throws himself into chair like a sulky boy. ORME picks up offending suitcase, puts it on table, takes out crumpled mass of silk. Gives LODGE and CARLETON each a part and all three make ludicrous attempts to fold neatly and repack in case. Noise outside of wagon on gravel walk. Sound of "Whoa there, Bess—Hi, Abner, where are you?")

(Enter MAC SPILLANE and JOHN RAND. SPILLANE gives one look at the three men, who pretend not to see him, and very elaborately shake out underwear and fold and refold. MAC removes pipe from his mouth—puts it back, takes out specs, puts them on, looks—looks again. Takes off specs, deliberately puts them away, puffs a couple of times on pipe then casually speaks.)

MAC. I suppose that there is a new kind of bait fer the fishes.

ORME. Why no, Mac, I should say it was a very old kind of feed for the chickens.

MAC. Wall, I take it some one's blundered, fer there's no chickens in this coop—least aways there's only one old black hen that I know about, and she ——

(Black arm protrudes in through door. Raps smartly on casing. Voice of old darky outside.)

VOICE (off stage). Marse Lodge and Marse Carl, does you care fo' starch in you' B. V. D.'s?

(All laugh heartily.)

LODGE. No, thanks, Jinny, just do 'em up to suit yourself; Carl and I are not fussy. Besides (To others.), we're thinking of adopting crêpe de chine for our "next friend"—hey, Hal?

CARL. Sure thing—and now, come on there, Mac, you old clam—you know you're just dying to ask where all

this came from. Speak up now—and tell us your news first.

MAC. News? Sure, man, I have no news. Mr. Rand and I met the train all right, but there was no one on it—least aways no one for “The Hut.” I was expecting to greet a Mr. Simon Semple who was due here to-day, but he was not there, and if one o’ you can tell me where he is I’ll be obliged to ye!

RAND (*coming forward*). Looks to me as though he’s right here, Mac. Better put your specs on again.

SEMPLÉ. The gentleman’s right, Mr. Spillane. I thought I wouldn’t break into this little party till these boys had got through poking fun at me. I’m Simon Semple, and I’ve a couple of apologies and a few more explanations to make to you for the way in which I landed here.

MAC. I’m glad to meet you, Semple. As fer apologies they’re never needed round here and I guess as long as you’re safely here, the explanations can wait. This is Mr. Rand, Mr. Semple, and I guess you’ve made yourself acquainted with everybody else.

SEMPLÉ. Glad to know you, Mr. Rand.

(*They shake hands.*)

RAND. Welcome to “The Hut,” Semple. Hope you’ll like it as well as the rest of us do.

SEMPLÉ (*slowly*). Seems to me your face looks kind of familiar to me, Mr. Rand. Have we ever met before, do you think? (*Others look up, interested.*)

RAND (*easily*). Well—not that I know of, Mr. Semple. I meet many men in the course of the day’s work, however—it’s barely possible you may have been one.

SEMPLÉ. Well, do you happen to be one of the Rands of the firm of Rand and ——

(*Enter ABNER.*)

ABNER. I put up the hoss, Mister Mac, and Jinny told me to tell yer that the leak in the laundry room has started again worse’n ever, and that it’s all soaked inter the dining-room, and ol’ Henry says he can’t fix it right

now in a hurry, and ye better plan ter have yer supper in here.

RAND. Fine, Mac. I like that idea. I'll help wait on table.

LODGE. Great—and say, Mac, look at this beauty. (*Holds up fish.*) Carl and I want to cook this for supper. Can't we broil it over the logs?

RAND. We sure can. I'll show you how. (*Looks around.*) Let's see, what can we use for a holder—good, I have it. The corn popper. Put your fish in like this, Lodge, and hold it close to the fire—so—see. Then when it gets real brown, just turn it —

CARL. (*admiringly*). Gee, you know just how to go about it, Mr. Rand. That's what I call a clever idea.

RAND. Oh, just a stunt remembered from my college camping days.

ORME (*eagerly*). So you're a college man, Rand. So'm I. What's yours?

RAND (*hesitating*). Why, Harvard—'88.

ORME. Really. Let's shake on it. I'm '81. (*They shake hands.*) Can't say I knew you in college, but maybe we'll be able to exchange some reminiscences after supper.

RAND. Fine. I never expected to meet a college mate up here—but the world's not such a big place after all, is it?

MAC. Well, now, if we have to have our supper in here, I'll appoint you head of the squad, Rand. I'll just take Mr. Semple off with me for a few minutes and show him his diggings. (*SEMPLÉ picks up black bag. Pushes other grip into corner with grunt and prepares to follow* MAC. *The latter looks around rather suspiciously once or twice. Goes to exit. SEMPLÉ follows.*) Get Abner and that lazy loafer, Henry, in here to help you, boys. Make 'em bring in the gate-leg table and the dishes, and tell Jinny to tell the cook we want things hot. Not middling—or medium—but hot.

LODGE. Especially the tea—eh, Mr. Semple?

SEMPLÉ. Tea—hot tea—ugh!

(MAC gives him sharp look.)

MAC. Well, come along, Semple. Got all your duds? We'll be right back, boys. [*Exit MAC and SEMPLE.*]

RAND. Well, now, fellows. What shall we do first? I think it's a bully idea to have our evening meal in here—but then, I've a great fondness for this room anyway.

CARL. You've been coming up here for quite a few years, haven't you, Mr. Rand?

RAND (*starting, as though in a day-dream*). Eh? oh yes. Ten, to be exact. This makes my tenth consecutive year up here with Mac.

ORME. Well, that's surely a good recommendation for "The Hut."

LODGE. For "The Hut," and for "Mac" too. You have to think a whole lot of a person to take a trip this length to see him every year.

RAND. Well, it's more than just an ordinary rest cure that I get up here. I consider Mac Spillane the very salt of the earth and I count him as one of my very best friends—proud to have him for one.

CARL. (*grips hands with RAND*). Gee, Mr. Rand, put it there. I never knew that any one felt like that but me. You know, Mac's such a clam. He never lets out a word about any one up here—but no one knows but Jimmy here—and maybe some one up There—what Mac Spillane did for me when I first came up here four years ago—down and out—in the dead of winter—health broken—courage gone—Jimmy almost carried me half the way. Gad! I'm not a particularly religious "cuss" but I can't help feeling that St. Peter ought to leave his post at the entrance to the Golden Gate, and take a day off to come down here with a nice little shining halo for Mac Spillane. (*The two shake again.*)

RAND. Thank you for your confidence, Carleton. I can understand, indeed.

CARL. Oh, it's no secret now. I'll tell you more about it some other time—or Jimmy may.

LODGE. Sure I will—but—after supper. Behold, before your eyes—a man, slowly starving to death. Here, Orme, you take a turn holding this speckled beauty over the fire. The odor of broiling trout is one that I never

knew could be so seductive. It just tickles my nose so that I can't stand it. Nix on the "sob stuff" any more right now, Hal. Come on, Mr. Rand. If you don't take charge and boss me round, I'll turn tables and do the bossing myself, and I can be some great little boss, I'll tell the world.

RAND. That's right, Lodge, I don't blame you. We'd better get on the job, or Mac will have our heads. Now—let's see—how shall we do this thing? We've got to show one hundred per cent. efficiency, you know.

LODGE. Efficiency! Efficiency! Lord, how I hate that word. That's all we hear in our branch of the service, and (*A little bitterly.*) then, when a man works his head off to show what he can do, and really gets results, what happens?

CARL. Why, the boss chief has an interview with the governor of this Grand Old State of ours, and the fellow that worked his head off is politely informed that the brother-in-law of some uncle of a cousin of the governor's is the man that's slated for the next promotion. And there's no argument about it! So there you are!

(While above conversation is going on, RAND and LODGE and CARLETON busy themselves setting up gate-leg table. RAND takes charge. Enter ABNER with basket containing dishes, silver and table-cloth. RAND passes LODGE one end of cloth, with remarks such as "Now there you are." "You look after dishes and I'll place the silver," etc. At CARLETON's last remark about the governor, RAND stops short in evident surprise, and stares at the speaker.)

RAND. The Governor of the State! Why, what has he got to do with you boys?

LODGE. Why, technically, he's at the head of the surveying service. That's where Hal and I both work. Of course there's a chief; he's our immediate superior, but he reports to the governor, and if I could say out loud in English what I am thinking to myself in French about that gentleman they call the Governor—Lord!

CARL. And the half has not been told. Come on

there, Jim. How did we get to be talking shop like this? It's against the rules. If we keep this up, we'll have supper about midnight.

ORME (*from fireplace*). Yes, and I think this gentleman is cooked to a turn, and to tell the truth, I'm nearly cooked myself.

(*Mops brow. RAND brings plate, ORME puts fish on it and places it on table.*)

(*Enter MAC.*)

MAC. Everybody on the job. We sure ought to have a fine meal.

ORME. Where's our latest addition, Mac—Mr. Semple?

MAC. Ha! Yes. Mr. Simon Semple. I left him out in his bunk, struggling into a pair of my old khakis and a flannel shirt that Jinny has done her best to ruin.

LODGE. Say, do you know I had the greatest desire to call him "Simple Simon" as soon as I heard his name.

ORME. Simple Simon. Pretty good. I've an idea, though, that he's not quite as simple as he seems. What do you say, Mac?

MAC. Well, now, I really can't say.

CARL. And wouldn't if you could, eh, Mac, you old clam? (*Squeezes his arm.*)

MAC. Sure he ought to be here by now—although I'm not so sure that he'll like his new outfit quite as well as the things he brought with him.

(*Looks around at the suitcase lying in the corner.*)

RAND. I haven't heard the whole story yet. Some one will have to tell it to me.

ORME. Oh, but please, please,—on with the eats. No more telling, say I.

(*Enter SEMPLE with large tray of food. ABNER with another.*)

SEMPLE. Well, well, here we are. How do you like my new rig? That ugly looking black out there insisted

that I should make myself useful as long as I was coming up here.

MAC. Oh, sure, Jinny's husband never believes in moving if he can get some one to move for him. (*Looks sharply at every one, then moves close to SEMPLE and sniffs suspiciously.*) Well, now, seems we're all ready. Line up, men, and we'll work up an appetite for supper. You stand here, Mr. Semple.

(*Places him in line. Gets a whiff of his breath, and turns away with a grimace. He then puts men through four or five setting-up exercises. The men open shirts at neck, turn them in, roll up sleeves, all except ORME. Exercises over, they seat themselves, laughing, chatting, glowing, and proceed to eat. ABNER waits on table, going out occasionally, returning with other food, removing plates, etc.*)

RAND (*rolling sleeves still higher*). Gee, Mac! That was great! Certainly made my blood circulate. Orme, why don't you open your shirt collar, man? You'd be twice as comfortable. Lord knows—no one stands on ceremony here. How about it, Mac?

MAC. No, I should say no one does.

ORME. Why—why—I —— (*Appears embarrassed.*) Why—I—I can't say I like it open—makes me kind of nervous—no—no thanks—er—I guess I'll keep it buttoned up—er—if it's all the same to you.

RAND (*surprised*). Oh, I beg your pardon. Of course it makes no difference to me whatever. I merely suggested it thinking you would be more comfortable.

(*Proceeds to eat. During the course of the meal, jokes, puns or knocks of a local character may be interpolated, and the meal may be made very short or prolonged as desired. Near close of meal, LODGE speaks.*)

LODGE. By the way, Mac, any more additions expected soon? Any newcomers?

MAC. Weel, I hardly think ——

(*Sound of machine outside. Loud noise. Door is flung open, GRIMES half leaps, half falls into room, a pair of bedraggled pajamas held outstretched.*)

CARL. Well, I'll be—hem—hem—hem—Hanged!

LODGE. Jee-umping Jee-iminy!

GRIMES (*to SEMPLE*). W-w-e-w-e-ll, here they are, sir—I—I—got 'em, sir—but my hat, Mr. Semple, please don't give me no such errands to do no more. I nearly lost my life getting these, sir.

SEMPLE (*leaving table*). These! These! You blooming idiot! Where the devil did you get these?

GRIMES. I—I—I stole 'em, sir!

MAC. What!

SEMPLE. You what!—You stole them?

(GRIMES *nods affirmatively.*)

MAC. But where in the name of Mike did you steal them from, man?

LODGE. There's no place within miles of here.

GRIMES. But I had the car, sir. Mr. Semple, he told me—you heard him—he said to buy—borrow—or steal them. Well—I did.

SEMPLE. Well, if you've got any filling at all in that cavity where your brain ought to be, will you kindly tell us where you stole them from.

GRIMES (*shrinking*). Why, I took them off the clothes-line—in a yard, sir. The family wash was hanging out—and—I couldn't get a pair nowheres around, sir, so I took 'em. But please, sir, I don't want no such jobs no more, sir,—I ———

ORME. But didn't any one see you taking them?

GRIMES. Oh, yes, sir, and that was the worst of it, sir. Two men saw me, and they chased me, sir, and if I hadn't had the car, sir, I—I think they would have caught me, sir.

LODGE. Well, I'll say it's a pretty novel way to replenish one's wardrobe, ch, Mr. Simple—er—I mean—Semple.

ORME. Very, I should say. Neat, as well as novel—as long as you don't get caught.

SEMPLE. Well, of all the nincompoops that I ever met—and pray—what did you do with the five dollars that I gave you to buy them with?

GRIMES (*apologetically*). Well, you see, sir, my conscience troubled me a bit, because I knew it wasn't right to steal, so I just took a clothes-pin and pinned the "fiver" on the line where the pajamas had been.

(SEMPLE *throws up his hands in despair. The others all laugh.*)

MAC. Well, now, man, I think he did very well at that, and I'll warrant he's starved, and half frozen. Come on, man, and have a bite of supper.

GRIMES. I will that—and thank-ee kindly, sir, I'm that cold that when my teeth chattered, I thought it was a knock in the engine.

(*While MAC clears a place for GRIMES at table, SEMPLE and others examine pajamas, all laughing.*)

MAC. Now, Abner, bring in some hot tea for Grimes and clear away the rest of this. And now, lads, shall we have our evening smoke? (*Looks at watch.*) We'll have our smoke, if you say so, but we're a bit later than usual, so we'll cut the evening walk down a bit.

(*All place chairs conveniently around fireplace and proceed to "light up."*)

SEMPLE. Cut the walk? But why cut it down? There's nothing else to do around here, is there?

LODGE. It's "early to bed and early to rise," you know, Mr. Semple. We turn in about eight-thirty or nine.

CARL. Yes—and we get up at six!

SEMPLE. Six! Bless my soul! Why, I could never get up at such an unearthly hour. Why, my niece is just about going to bed a good many mornings at that time. What's the big idea?

MAC. But ye ken, man, this is the simple life around here. We keep early hours, and live natural, and that makes a man fit.

RAND. And there's nothing better, take it from me, Semple.

SEMPLE. Oh, well, I am a good sport—and as long as I'm in Rome—well—but six o'clock. My Lord!

(*Meantime, GRIMES having finished, he and ABNER clear and remove table, setting room to rights. ABNER whistles as he works. GRIMES softly hums. Men sit in silence and smoke. Finally ABNER sings a little louder. LODGE and CARLETON join. A little later RAND joins, then ORME and finally MAC. Any desired songs, suited to mixed male voices. If all cannot sing, some voices may come from behind scenes. After first song, GRIMES goes to SEMPLE, and in pantomime indicates that he is thirsty. SEMPLE takes bottle from hip pocket and passes it to chauffeur but MAC's long arm intercepts and claims bottle. With a shake of the head MAC denies SEMPLE's attempt to regain bottle. Latter laughs and sings solo. Author here suggests song "O, I Wish I was Annie Laurie, With a Wee Bit of Scotch in Me." For second chorus MAC sings, substituting words, "I'm Related to Annie Laurie, for I've plenty of Scotch in me."*)

(*MAC goes to door and pours out liquor, GRIMES showing signs of keen distress as he does so. After as many encores as desired, all find caps and sweaters, and in twos, slowly go out, putting on hats as they go, singing as they walk.*)

SLOW CURTAIN

(*SECOND PICTURE.—If possible, show full moon—light streaming in through window and door. Men's voices coming from distance. ABNER and GRIMES straightening room, going slowly out as curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The same as in ACT I. The following morning.*

(Curtain rises on RAND and SEMPLE playing checkers. Game continues in silence for few seconds after curtain is up, then RAND finally says "Check!")

RAND. There goes your last king, Semple. How's our score now?

SEMPLE. Three to three, Rand. We'll have to play the rubber after dinner.

RAND. Not to-day, I'm afraid, Semple. I'm starting off on a little trip this morning—I'll probably be too tired when I get back.

(Enter LODGE and CARLETON with tennis rackets and balls. MAC follows immediately.)

LODGE. What! You're not leaving us so soon, Mr. Rand. We can't let you off like this. Carl and I were just trying to arrange for a game of doubles.

RAND. Oh, no, I'm not leaving, really. Just going off on a little pilgrimage for the day—and by the way, Semple, that man of yours, Grimes, seems to have taken a sort of fancy to me and wants to constitute himself my body-guard. I was sort of thinking I'd take him along with me if you don't mind.

SEMPLE. Mind! Good Lord no, take him anywhere you like. I hope he'll make a better body-guard than he does a chauffeur.

CARL. Well, he seemed grateful enough to Mac for letting him stay at all. When he heard that no automobiles were allowed up here his look was comical.

MAC. But he makes a pretty good general handy man, for a' that. *(Puts hand on RAND'S shoulder.)* Lad—must ye go?

RAND *(earnestly, in low tone)*. Must—Mac. I'd

never forgive myself if I didn't. You know how it is with me.

MAC. I know, lad, I know. But I'm a bit fearful of the weather. (*Goes to door and peers out.*) Shouldn't be surprised if we had some wetting down before the night.

CARL. Why, Mac—I'm sure you're a poor weather prophet. It's a wonderful day. Doesn't look to me as though it would rain for a week.

MAC. Well, we'll see. And you dress up real tight, John—and take Grimes along—it's a good idea. I'll go and see about some lunch for you.

(*RAND looks out of door while MAC is speaking.*)

RAND. By the way, Mac. What's the matter with Orme to-day? He's out there walking up and down like a caged lion. He never ate a mouthful of breakfast, and he looks to me like a man under a terrible nervous strain.

MAC. He is. (*Others all look up.*) He's pretty nearly at the end.

SEMPLE. Ahem! Ahem!

(*Enter ORME. Looks from one to the other as though in doubt. Then shoving hat on back of head, thrusting hands deep in pockets, he bursts out.*)

ORME. Mac, I'm going home. (*All look at him.*) I can't stand it any longer. I'm going home.

MAC. 'Tis the very best thing ye can do, man. I'd been mindin' to tell ye for several days, but did na like to ask you to leave. "The Hut" can do nothing for you till your mind's at ease.

SEMPLE (*puts hand on ORME's shoulder*). Look here, Orme, I'm a peppery old bird, I know, and Heaven knows I've had enough to make me so, but at least my troubles, whatever they are, are not as bad as yours seem to be right now. Now I don't mean to pry into your affairs, but I just want to say that if I can do anything to help you, you can count on Simon Semple.

LODGE. Me too, Mr. Orme.

CARL. So say I!

RAND. And I'm with the boys, too, Orme. You know we don't mean to be inquisitive, but if you need us—say the word.

ORME (*visibly affected*). Thanks, thanks, men. Believe me, I do appreciate your offers. I'd like to tell you what's troubling me. Maybe you could advise me. Do you think it would do any good, Mac?

MAC. 'Twould do no harm, anyway.

ORME. Well—it's not easy for me to talk, let me tell you, for my business has trained me to keep my mouth shut as much as possible, and let the other fellow do the talking, but this time I'm up against it.

MAC. Well, out with it, man, and I'll help ye. Maybe you'll feel better when you've shared it. Ye see, boys, Mr. Orme by profession is a private detective—head of the firm of Orme, Lincoln & Company.

ORME. Yes, that's so, but when a detective has to go to work to catch a thief in his own fam——

MAC. Easy now, easy. Them's harsh words, man, them's harsh words.

ORME. Yes, I suppose so. Well, you see, boys, it's my boy, my only son, that's knocked me all off my balance. His mother is dead, and he's all I've got and—well, my heart's just wrapped up in him.

MAC. Well, why not? He's as likely a lad as you'd want to meet. Good looking, too. Not a bit like his father. (*Others all smile.*)

ORME. I sent him to college. You know, Rand, how it is. We all want our boys to go back to the old place.

RAND. Don't blame you a bit. It's what I should do if I had a son.

LODGE. Adopt me, will you, Mr. Rand? I'm just dying to be a real college Rah Rah boy.

CARL. Shut up, Jim. Can't you see this is no time for fooling?

LODGE. Beg pardon, Orme. I forgot. Please go on.

ORME. Oh, there's not much to tell. He didn't take to his books, and of course got in with a crowd that do nothing but run around and look for a good time.

MAC. He's not a bad boy, though, I'd take an oath on that.

RAND. Well, that's saying a whole lot, Orme. I'd take Mac's judgment of a person any time.

ORME. I would have too—once. But now—well—I don't know. Anyway, one night about a week ago, Dicky, my boy, went to a dance. He's lost his heart to a girl in the crowd he's been traveling with, Dulcie Varney, so of course she was in the party.

LODGE. Gosh! don't hold that against him, Mr. Orme. I've done the same thing myself.

ORME. Lord, no, I know better than that. I was young myself, once. Besides, she's a nice enough little girl—I found out that much—more money than brains perhaps—but, anyway, that night she wore a diamond pin on a black velvet band round her throat, and a chain of very valuable pearls.

MAC. They were jewels that had been her mother's, Orme—don't forget that's why she valued them.

ORME (*heavily*). Oh, I don't forget—anything. Well, boys, you know the ridiculous customs of the young folks these days. None of 'em wear half enough clothes, so this fool young woman decided it was too warm to have anything round her neck, while dancing, and she takes off her diamond pin and pearls and gives them to Dicky to keep for her.

SEMPLE. The young idiot. I can just imagine the rest.

ORME. Sure. There are always plenty of the light-fingered gentry in places of that kind, and one of them very politely lifted the pearls from Dicky's pocket.

CARL. What a shame! And the diamond pin, too?

ORME. No, that evidently wasn't so easy to get, so they were obliged to make away without it. Well, Dicky took the girl home in his car with another couple, and they both completely forgot about the jewels. When he was about half-way home with the other two, he suddenly thought of the stuff, put his hand in his pocket, pulled out the diamond pin, and found the pearls were gone.

LODGE. I can imagine how he felt. Gosh, if it was me—my stomach would turn over and lie down on its back.

ORME. Now if the young fool had only come to me right off, the whole thing could have been fixed up in no time, but instead of that he gives the diamond pin to the girl that was in the car with him, and tells her to take it to Dulcie the first thing in the morning, and to tell her he'd bring back the pearls as soon as he found them. Then off he goes to the hotel where he'd been dancing and spends the next two days trying to trace the beads. Idiot!

CARL. Well, I suppose he meant well.

ORME (*wearily*). I suppose so, but he might know he'd never find 'em that way. I know the light-fingered gentry pretty well, and they're mighty slippery. You don't catch 'em so easily. Well, the first thing I knew about the whole affair was when Allen Varney—that's Dulcie's father, walked into my office and practically told me to my face that my boy was a thief. Gad! I saw red for a minute.

SEMPLE. Allen Varney! I know him, and Jerusephus how I hate that man! He's got a tongue like a two-edged sword.

RAND. Well, the young lady got the pin back safely, didn't she?

ORME. No—she didn't. Varney told me about some girl friend that telephoned the next morning and said she had the pin but had to leave town very unexpectedly and would send it to her. Huh! I could tell from the way he wiggled the end of his nose that he thought the whole business was a put-up job. And when Dicky didn't show up—well, I began to think things too.

SEMPLE. I hope you didn't let Varney know it. Gosh, I hate to agree with that man!

ORME. Oh, I didn't give him much satisfaction, you may bet on that! But that night took ten years off my life, let me tell you. Well, to make a long story short, about two in the morning my brave lad Dicky came home. Told me the whole story, and begged me to advance him enough money to pay for the pearls, which, of course, he did not find.

MAC. The lad was honest, at any rate.

ORME. Yes, I see that now, but I was so riled up, and

half dead from want of sleep, and half crazy, too, I think, that I laughed in his face; and when he told me he had sent the diamond pin back to Dulcie with her girl friend, I laughed some more. I told him I could see he was putting up a job to get money out of me—told him the pin had never been returned—well—I guess there's nothing I didn't say.

LODGE. Gee! That's pretty tough! What did Dicky say?

ORME (*bows head on hands. MAC pats his shoulder*). Not a word! Never opened his head! But the look on his face and in his eyes—well—it's just haunting me! It's killing me! And that's not the end, either. I finished by telling him to get out—my own boy, Dicky—"Get out of here," I yelled at him, "and don't let me see your face again till you find that stuff, or I'll let the law have its way and you can rot in jail for all of me!" He went. And I've moved Heaven and Earth since,—and I can't find him.

(*Bows head in utter dejection.*)

RAND. Now, look here, Orme, giving up like this won't help any. It never gets you anywhere. Surely five heads are better than two. Maybe we can think up something you've overlooked.

MAC. Maybe we can. Shall I be telling them the rest, man? (ORME *nods*.) Well, next morning, having had time to cool off a bit, our friend here, not having been a detective for thirty years for nothing, decided to look into the matter a bit for himself, on a chance that the boy might have been telling the truth after all. Of course it all had to be kept on the Q. T. to avoid any publicity, but the hotel people have a deal of respect for Mr. Orme's good opinion, so, in less than twenty-four hours that pearl necklace was back in his hands.

SEMPLE. So Dicky told the truth! Good for the boy! What happened then, Orme? Gee! I'm more excited over this than I was when I—but go on, go on!

ORME (*rousing*). I tell you, fellows, when I closed my hands on those beads—and then remembered what I had said to my boy—well—something just seemed to snap

in my brain. I couldn't think any more. I couldn't reason. I couldn't plan! It was too late to put the pearls away in the bank vault. I didn't want to put them in the office safe for fear of too many questions. All I could think of was—if I could only get away somewhere where I could sleep—could think—where no one would ask questions—I might be able to figure out how I could find the boy and fix things right with him.

RAND. And you thought of Mac. Good for you! You couldn't have picked out a better place.

ORME. Think! I didn't take time to think! I jumped into a taxi, bolted down to the station—just caught a train—and came. (*To SEMPLE.*) You're not the only bird that's strutting around here in borrowed plumage. I'm helping Mac to wear out some of his old clothes, too.

CARL } (*together*). But what did you do with the
LODGE } pearls, Mr. Orme?

ORME. What did I do with them? (*Stands up and very dramatically rips open his collar and shirt front, showing a string of pearls fastened round his neck.*) Now you fellows know why I wouldn't wear my shirt open at the neck.

SEMPLE. Egad! This is better than a movie thriller! I thought this was the simple life! Why, I'm shaking like a leaf. (*Holds up his hand to show trembling.*) All this story needs now is a couple of murders to finish it up in proper style.

ORME. Well, thank God, there's nothing like that, although I think there might have been if any one had tried to take these beads away from me. I wouldn't trust them out of my sight. I wouldn't even let Mac put 'em in the safe. Heaven knows they've cost me dearly enough! And that's the story. And now—I'm going home—for I know I'll go crazy if I don't start to do something.

RAND. I wish you wouldn't go right now, Orme. I shall certainly respect your confidence. I know all the boys feel the same; but I wish you'd give me a chance to think about this thing a bit. I've had a good deal of experience untangling knotty problems. Mac here'll bear me out in that. I'm a lawyer, you see, and I feel sure

that I'll be able to figure this thing out for you. One day more can't make such a difference. What do you say, Orme? Stay over to-morrow.

LODGE. I think that's mighty good advice, Orme. Do stay. I don't know that I can be good for much in the way of help, but I'm yours to command if you can use me. Mac, you make him stay.

MAC. Weel, he knows he's welcome to make "The Hut" his home as long as he pleases.

ORME. Yes, I know that. There are not many like you, Mac Spillane. Well, I won't go right away this minute. I'll think it over a bit.

RAND. Fine! Say you won't go till I come back, old man. I'll be in before dark, and ——

CARL. Surely you are not deserting us, Mr. Rand. We can't get along without you.

RAND. Oh, no, just a little trip that I make every year when I am up here. I was so interested in Orme's tale that I almost forgot I was going.

MAC. I'm afraid we're in for some weather, John. Must ye go?

RAND. Yes, really must, Mac. You see, I've only two more days up here, and I'd never forgive myself if I missed going. I'll go out and get ready (*Goes to exit, then turns.*), and since this seems to be a day of confidences, Mac, you have my permission to tell the boys what sends me out on a pilgrimage each year. There's no one else on earth that I'd trust to tell the story—but you. [*Exit.*]

SEMPLE. Gad! Now I'm getting nervous all over again. Pon my honor, I've got goose-flesh already! I'm going back to the city with you, Orme; maybe I'll find things peaceful and quiet there.

CARL. (*pokes him in fun*). Ah, go on, you old fraud. You know you're enjoying this like the thrill that comes once in a lifetime. But say (*To MAC.*), it's the funniest thing—I could take an oath that I've met Mr. Rand somewhere. (*Thinks.*) His face certainly does look familiar to me!

SEMPLE. Funny. I thought the same thing when I first met him. But then, if he's a lawyer it's not strange.

Most of them get their faces in the papers at some time or other—for some reason or other.

ORME. Good Lord, Mac. Why did you let me bother Rand with my troubles when he's got some worries of his own on his mind? I never would have done it if I had known.

MAC. Sure, 'twas no harm at all, man, no harm at all. 'Tis not a real trouble he has any more,—only an old memory that sends him out there to search for something I'm afraid he'll never find —

SEMPLE. But what is it, what is it? Don't be so long getting to the story.

LODGE. But I thought you were "fed up" with thrillers.

(A long black arm is thrust in through doorway, and raps smartly on woodwork.)

VOICE. Mars Spillane!

MAC. Yes, all right, Jinny. What is it?

VOICE. That po' white trash "shuver" done mak' me come up here with these here aigs. He done says that Jerushy hen jest laid 'em, and one is fo' the Simple Gent, and the other is fo' Mars Rand.

(The hand reappears with two eggs in its palm.)

MAC *(takes eggs)*. All right, Jinny. Tell Grimes that next time he should whisper in Jerushy's ear to lay a few more. We don't like to play favorites up here.

SEMPLE. Simple gent—Simple—I suppose she means me! Just like that asinine idiot to interrupt just when I was so interested! Why didn't he come himself?

VOICE *(off stage)*. He done say he's gittin' ready to go 'way on a trip. Lordy Lord! *(Laughs a cackling laugh.)* He's so sot up with pride coz Mars Rand's done lettin' him go—he's struttin' round worse 'n Jerushy did when she laid two aigs. *(Laughs loudly; then disappearing.)* Ha! Ha! Ha!

LODGE. We're out of luck, Hal. No fresh eggs for us!

(MAC puts eggs on table.)

SEMPLE. I don't want one, I'm sure. I hate eggs. Give 'em both to Rand. Let him take 'em along for his lunch—and now, out with it, Mac. What's it all about?

MAC (*slowly*). Weel, here's the tale. Years ago there was a family lived 'bout five miles beyond here. Mother, father, daughter Gloria. The mother—weel,—I had loved her for years—(*Pauses.*) but—she married the other man. Later—she died. The girl—weel—she was as dear to me as though she had been my own child, and the first year John came up here—ten years ago—he met her—here—and fell in love with her. That was before I took regular guests, so Gloria used to come and go as she liked.

LODGE. Is that the girl whose picture hangs over your desk out in the office?

CARL. Oh, yes, the girl with the dog? I remember.

MAC. Yes, that's Gloria. John gave her the dog. He was a faithful guardian.

SEMPLE. Well, well, go on, go on.

MAC. Sure, there's little to tell. John came up here a lot that first year, and they planned to marry. She used to meet him at a big tree about half-way between this place and hers, and sometimes they left letters for each other there. The country round was a bit different then than it is now, and there was a back road that was open to travel, and that led direct to Sanborn, the next town. Once in a while an auto used to go over that road. There was lots of liquor to be got in Sanborn. It's different now.

ORME. I think I can finish the story, Mac. As you said before, I've not been a detective thirty years for nothing.

MAC. Weel, nae doot ye can. It's mostly told. One day John sprained his ankle, and couldna go to meet her. She got tired waitin' and started down to "The Hut" hersel'. One o' those cursed "speed wagons" got her, and we never knew a thing about it till "Scottie" crawled in here—one leg broken—and sent us out to find her.

SEMPLE. So that's why you don't allow any machines around "The Hut," ch?

MAC. That's why, mon. John and I bought up all

the land for five miles round, and closed up the road to machines. That's why we have no whiskey here, either, even for medicine, for it must have been a party o' drunks that could do such dirty work. They never even stopped to see what mischief they had wrought—and we never got 'em—damn 'em.

ORME. Amen to that, Mac—but what sends Rand out there now?

LODGE. And do you mean to say, Mac, that he's been faithful to her memory all these years?

MAC. All these years, lad, and never missed a trip out to the meeting place.

LODGE. Gosh! Hal! Do you hear that? I guess I better stop complaining, then, and——

ORME. But what does Rand go out to the place for now?

MAC. Weel, ye see, mon, she were not gone when we found her, and we brought her here. Just before she "went out" she opened her eyes and said to John, "I left it out there—by the tree." It seemed to worry her a good bit—whatever it was—and John, thinking to soothe her, said, "All right, dear, I'll get it." Then a minute later she said, "John, promise me you'll go—and get it." And the lad, holding her hand, said, "I promise, dear." And so he goes, year after year, looking for something that she left there for him—but so far he's never found it.

SEMPLE (*blowing nose loudly*). Bless my soul! That makes me feel bad! I must write to my wife and niece this very day. I was so anxious to pack 'em both off, so I could get away, I wouldn't listen to a word they wanted to tell me about engagements or errands or messages or anything else. And then when I got here, I was so mad about the D-a—er—ahem—I mean the confounded old suitcase, that I never sent them a line. But after your story, Mac, I guess I'll have to be nice to them.

(*Enter RAND and GRIMES, dressed for trip.*)

RAND. Well, we're off, Mac. So long, boys.

ORME. So long, Rand, and all our good wishes go with you. Good luck, and God be with you.

LODGE (*picking up eggs from table*). And in behalf of your friends, Jinny, and Jerushy the hen, let me present you with this little token of their esteem.

(RAND *laughs and passes eggs to GRIMES, who puts them in the knapsack.*)

MAC. Don't go too far, lad, nor stay too long—I'm a bit fearful of the weather.

RAND. Nonsense, Mac. It's a perfect Autumn day. But don't worry. We'll be back before sundown. You might give us a song, boys—to start us on our way.

MAC. Aye! That we will.

SEMPLE. And Grimes, take good care of Mr. Rand.

GRIMES. I will, sir.

(RAND and GRIMES *go slowly out. Others group conveniently about, beginning song "It's a Long, Long Trail."*)

SLOW CURTAIN

(NOTE. *Curtain is lowered a few seconds to denote the passing of several hours.*)

SCENE II.—Same as in preceding scene. Late evening of the same day.

(*Curtain rises on ORME slowly pacing back and forth.*

SEMPLE *seated, reading a magazine. LODGE and CARLETON working together untangling a fishing line. Room darkened, except for reading lamp and light from fireplace. Occasional flashes of lightning show through window. Rumble as of distant thunder.*)

(*Enter ABNER with arm full of logs. Kneels to replenish fire.*)

ORME. Here, I'll help you with those. It'll give me something to do.

ABNER. Ain't Mr. Mac come back yet? The telephone over to his office has been ringing for a long time, but the place is locked and he's got the key with him.

ORME. No, he's gone out again to reconnoiter and see if he can see any signs of Mr. Rand or Grimes.

SEMPLE. Gad! It's too bad they had to get caught in a downpour like that. They will be wet to the skin.

CARL. The rain wasn't the worst, though. Gosh! That one bolt of lightning and the crash that went with it nearly knocked me off my feet.

ABNER. Well, it's stopped raining now. (*Jumps to his feet.*) By Golly, I just thought—I got to go—I got to do something! [*Exits hurriedly.*]

LODGE. Now what do you suppose he's got up his sleeve?

ORME. Oh, some plan to help, I suppose. He's a good kid, even if he is slow-witted—and he idolizes Mac.

SEMPLE. Yes, and Mac idolizes Rand. I could tell it from the way he looked while he was telling us the story. It would be an awful blow to him if anything happened.

LODGE. Oh, come now, don't talk like that! Of course nothing's happened. They probably went in somewhere to get out of the storm, and now it's so dark, it's taking them longer to get back.

ORME (*sotto voce*). I wish I thought it. (*Aloud.*) Ha! Here's Mac. Well?

(*Enter MAC, clad in oilskins, lantern in hand.*)

MAC (*removes garments*). Not a sign of them yet. I hope to God no harm has come to them. Anyway it has stopped raining now. I—don't—just know ——

(*Enter ABNER, excited.*)

ABNER. Oh, Mr. Mac, please let me climb the big maple and hang the lantern up the way we did last year. Maybe they'll be able to see it. It's pretty dark now; and I've got the wood-pile all ready to light. Please, Mr. Mac.

MAC. 'Tis a gude idea, lad, and ye are a gude lad to think of it. Take the light and be careful. Don't fall out of the tree.

CARL. I'll go along and help him. I think it's the best plan yet.

MAC. Good! And the rest of ye—some of ye anyhow, can go and light the wood-pile and keep it blazing. Maybe it will be a beacon for them if they've lost their way.

ALL. Sure we will! Good idea! That's right, etc.

ABNER (*pausing at exit*). And Mr. Mac, the telephone's been ringing these last fifteen minutes.

MAC. I'll go right over. You boys look after the fire—and be careful—all of ye.

[*Exit* CARLETON, ABNER and MAC.]

ORME. Great Heavens! I wonder if that call might be for me! I'm just aching to get back to town and see what's happening, but I haven't the heart to go till I see Rand safely back again.

SEMPLE. Well, a little longer can't make any great difference, Orme. Queer, isn't it, how well acquainted folks can get in a place like this, in a few days. Now I feel just as interested in all you people as though I had known you all my life. Yet in the city, it takes years to know folks—and then you're never sure you know them. Come on, Jimmy, you and I will be chief firemen. (*They move towards exit.*) Good Heavens, I wish my niece had had the sense to fall in love with a fellow like you, Jimmy, instead of the darn fool kind that she travels round with. Come on, Orme, you come too.

[*Exit, all three.*]

(*Empty stage. Blazing of light outside, if possible, to show bonfire. Figures moving back and forth in front of window and door. LODGE comes back into room for a moment, searches for matches. Goes out again. While fire is burning all begin to sing, "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Before end of song, a loud shout from ABNER, presumably from top of tree.*)

ABNER (*off stage*). Hi! Hi! Mr. Mac. I think I see them.

ALL (*off stage*). Where! Where!

(General shouting of "Rand!"—"John Rand!"—"Hi there, John!" Then from SEMPLE.)

SEMPLE (*off stage*). Grimes, you blasted idiot—where are you—can't you talk?

(Finally LODGE rushes by the door, yelling. Others follow, and a moment later they half drag, half carry RAND and GRIMES into the room. Both men dripping wet, hatless, and apparently exhausted. Men bustle about to make them comfortable, all talking at once, start taking off shoes, etc. RAND apparently faints. Enter MAC who very quietly calms everybody and takes charge.)

MAC. All right, all right, boys. Thank God they're here. Abner, run and tell cook we need some hot tea, and hot water too; plenty of it.

(ABNER runs.)

SEMPLE (*groans*). Now, don't you wish you had that bottle you took away from me? That would bring him around pretty quick.

MAC. But I know that John would rather die than touch the stuff. (*Feels his pulse.*) Oh, he'll be all right in a few minutes.

(Enter ABNER with two cups.)

ABNER. Cook says he'll have two hot baths ready right away. You should bring them both in.

(MAC takes one cup. Motions ABNER towards GRIMES with the other.)

MAC. That's the idea. You boys look after Grimes. I'll have John feeling fit as a fiddle in about two minutes. (*Forces tea between RAND's lips.*) You rub his hands now, Semple, and we'll start the circulation up a bit.

(One of RAND's hands, outstretched on table or hanging down, has fist tightly clenched. SEMPLE attempts to open it without success.)

SEMPLE. Gad! He's got some fist, I'll say. I can't do a thing with it.

(Rubs RAND'S arms. GRIMES attempts to talk.)

CARL. *(trying to make out what GRIMES is saying)*. What's that? What! Well, never mind, old man, don't try to talk. You can tell us all about it later. *(GRIMES tries to sit up and talk. Others force him back.)* What is it, old man—the tree—yes—I get you—it—what—it—busted. Yes. *(To MAC.)* He says the tree busted.

(ORME points to head and shakes.)

ORME. Probably he's off a little. Exposure!

(RAND slowly returns to consciousness. His fist is still tightly clenched. Sits up, looks around for a moment as though dazed. Finally sees MAC. Struggles to his feet, holds out both hands to MAC.)

RAND. Mac, old man, I found it—I found it! The tree—the lightning split it open—it was there, hanging on a little knot in the wood. She—Gloria—must have put her hand in through the little hole, and hung it there. My God, Mac, I feel as though she had come back to me this day.

(He staggers a bit. MAC puts his two arms around him, and RAND puts his head down on MAC'S shoulder, apparently shaken with emotion. Others look on in sympathetic silence.)

MAC. There, there, lad, don't take on like this. It can do no good at this late day. Pull yourself together now, *(Pats RAND'S arm.)* and let me see what you've found. *(RAND looks up and holds out his hand, opening the clenched fist and disclosing an old-fashioned locket. MAC looks at it, takes it, and raises it to his lips.)* 'Tis the one I gave her mother—may Heaven bless her—and if I remember rightly, it opens. But you and Grimes —

(Black arm is thrust in and raps.)

VOICE (*off stage*). Cook done says as how water don't keep hot forever, and he says to tell you ef yo' don't hurry those men along, he's done goin' to take them baths hisself.

LODGE. Both at one time! I'd like to see it!

MAC. Come, come, boys, cook's right. These lads should have a hot bath, some supper, and then to bed, and not another word about this whole affair until the morning.

(*He assists RAND. LODGE and CARLETON help GRIMES, and they exit.*)

SEMPLE. Well, by Gad! I begin to feel the need of a few winks, myself. Orme, how about you?

ORME. I'd like to sleep for a week if I could.

SEMPLE. Well, I don't see how you can help it after a day like this. I feel as though I'd been having a speaking acquaintance with a live electric feed wire. Ha!—A new shock every minute. Well, now that Rand's all safe and settled, maybe your troubles will all be washed away by the rain-storm, too. I sure hope so, old man. And now (*Gapes.*) I'm going to bed. I'm half dead. I never thought when I was getting close to Nature that she was such a lively old Dame. (*Gapes.*) Nighty night, old man.

ORME. Oh, well, I guess I'll tumble in myself. Perhaps things will look different in the morning.

[*They exit arm in arm.*]

SLOW CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same as in ACTS I and II.*

(Curtain rises on RAND seated at table, busily writing. GRIMES sweeping up the hearth. CARLETON at opposite side of room busy at any convenient occupation. Enter SEMPLE and ORME, latter carrying football. MAC follows; all three are puffing and apparently out of breath.)

SEMPLE. Ye Gods! But that is sure some exercise. Never thought I'd live to see the day when I would do any more high kicking. But we had to go some to beat Mac, didn't we, Orme?

ORME. I'll say we did. It's great sport, though. I used to go in for a lot of that sort of thing in my college days; but I guess we're getting too old for much of it now, except when we're up here at "The Hut."

SEMPLE *(goes towards RAND)*. So you're really leaving us, eh, Rand? Mac's just been telling me.

RAND. Yes, I'm really going. I'm afraid I've been away too long as it is, and now that I've found the locket, I haven't any excuse for staying away longer, this time, anyway.

CARL. Well, we'll surely miss you, Mr. Rand. I hate to see you go.

RAND. Thanks, old man. Orme's going down with me, to-morrow afternoon, so you'll be a very small and select party after that.

CARL. Oh, really? I didn't know that. Any news, Mr. Orme?

ORME. No, nothing so far; but I've got to the point where I can't stand being away any longer—besides——

RAND. Besides, I've got one or two ideas in my head that I think may help Orme to straighten the matter out.

MAC. I'm sure John can do it if any one can.

SEMPLE. Say, you two hate each other, don't you?

I'd call you a regular mutual admiration society. Now if ——

(Enter LODGE with a rush. Evidently in very bad temper. Waves a letter in his hand. Throws it into CARLETON's lap.)

LODGE (*in fury and disgust*). Well! I'll be switched!

MAC. Easy, lad, easy. Let not thy angry passions rise!

LODGE (*angrily*). Oh, it's all right for you people to talk—I've got to go home!

CARL. (*still reading*). Gosh! This is a darn shame. I'm awfully sorry, Jim, old man.

SEMPLE. Well, well, what is it, what is it? I hate being kept in suspense like this.

LODGE. Oh, it's nothing but a letter from my chief saying (*Snatches letter from CARLETON and reads.*) "that the Governor of our beloved State, finding it necessary to be away, Henniker" (*Looks up.*) that's the guy that's "teacher's pet"—"has had to go on duty in the Governor's office, and it is with great regret that His Excellency himself was obliged to order your immediate return." Rot! I wish His Excellency would go straight to the devil!

CARL. Gee! I don't believe there's another service department in the State where they put over as many raw deals as they do in ours.

LODGE. Don't you fool yourself, sweet innocent child. It's the same in them all. Just have a "pull" up at the Capitol, and you can get away with murder nowadays. And why? Because we've got a Governor up there that's nothing but a big stiff, that's why. A low-down, tricky politician, that's what, and he's a piker, too. He never gives a good man even a chance, unless he can't help himself.

ORME. Gee! Jim, you haven't left him a rag of character to bless himself with. Now I voted for him at the last election, and ——

SEMPLE. So did I. I thought he was a pretty good sort at that!

RAND. Just why are you so sore at him, Jimmy? I mean, outside of this cutting short your vacation.

LODGE. Sore? Heavens, man! Why shouldn't I be sore? He's just about ruined my life, that's all.

RAND. Well, that's a pretty serious accusation, all right. If it's true, I certainly don't blame you.

LODGE. True! Of course it's true. You don't suppose I'd be telling such tales just for the fun of it, do you?

CARL. Cool off, Jim, cool off. I know you're mad clean through, but (*To others.*) you see, it's like this. You can't really blame Jimmy for feeling the way he does. We've both been in the Department for years. Went in as kids and worked up. The old chief gave us every chance, and we were both chuck full of ambition to get ahead. Well, my ambition got a knockout blow when my health gave way, and nobody but Mac here knows what I went through when I heard it was my lungs. However, Mac saved me from—well—you can imagine—and I buried my ambition and went back. I know I can only be a desk man and that's as far as I can go, and I've made up my mind to be satisfied; but it's different with Jimmy.

MAC. But you're not telling the whole thing, boy. I see I'll have to butt in! These men don't know that one of the finest little women on earth stuck closer to ye than the bark to the tree, and married ye by main force —

CARL. She sure did. God bless her!

LODGE. You bet she did, and she's a peach, too, and Hal knows what I think of her. But every time I go down to his house to spend an evening and see how happy he is, and what a cozy home he's got—why—I'm so—so—blamed jealous, that I'm a sorehead for a week.

SEMPLE. Well, well, I don't see what you're whimpering about. Go and do the same thing!

LODGE. Ha! Fine chance I've got. Why —

CARL. You see, Mr. Semple, Jimmy had the misfortune—(*To LODGE.*) you don't mind, old man, (*LODGE shakes a negative.*) Jimmy just happened to fall in love with a girl who belongs to a very wealthy family, and he

doesn't feel that he has the right to ask her to marry him on his present salary.

LODGE. I certainly won't. And that isn't all, Rand, either. The most outrageous part of this whole business is that two years ago I had a chance to go with a private firm—big engineering concern. I wasn't going to get more money to start with, it's true, but the chances for advancement were big, and like the nice honest little schoolboy that I was, I went to the Chief and told him the whole story. He actually promised me, didn't he, Hal, that he'd see that I went up in my Department if I'd only stay. Gave me lots of palaver about needing young men of my ability and all that rot. Well, the first big promotion that came—what happened? Henniker, a rank outsider, walked in on velvet. A friend of the Governor's. I didn't have a thing to go by except the Chief's word. So where did I get off?

RAND. Why didn't you go direct to the Governor yourself? I think it's always best to deal with a man first hand.

CARL. That shows you don't know our worthy Governor, Mr. Rand. (*MAC turns away and coughs.*) He's harder to reach than the King of England, and besides the Chief's got such a pull with him that the minute you try for an audience with the Governor, the Chief hears about it and informs you that all official matters reach His Excellency through him. Oh, it's a great game. But I'm sorry for Jimmy. He's wasting his best years, and doing some mighty fine work, and it's not appreciated.

LODGE. Sure, if he'd tell me to come back and give me the chance to go up to the Governor's office, I wouldn't be so sore; but oh, no! Henniker, of course, gets the cream.

ORME. Well, I always knew "pull" counted for a whole lot in government work, but I never dreamed conditions were as bad as this. However, you can't keep a good man down, and my advice to you, Lodge, is to get out—now—while you're young!

SEMPLE. Sure! The only thing to do! You come and see me! I'll recommend you to some men that I do

business with. But if I were you, Jim, my boy, I'd take my luck in my hands, and walk right up and ask that young lady to marry me; and if she's got an ounce of common sense in her head, she'll do it.

CARL. That's just what I've been telling him for the last six months.

MAC. 'Tis my advice, too.

LODGE. Rot! On my two hundred a month! Why, I'd just about be able to pay for her perfumed bath salts.

RAND (*dryly*). Maybe she doesn't use 'em perfumed.

SEMPLE. Maybe she doesn't bathe very often.

(Laughs at his own joke.)

LODGE. Oh, you can all laugh and have your little jokes, but I'll have to go back just the same. (*Twists the letter into a hard roll.*) There! I wish I had hold of our precious Governor's neck instead of this. I'd wring it again, just for luck.

(Throws paper into fire. The sound of two shots, in quick succession, is heard outside. All jump to their feet in alarm. MAC runs to side window and peers out. RAND joins him, standing as much as possible in shadow. CARLETON runs to door, flings it wide open, looks up and down road. Is almost knocked down by a panting and disheveled figure, of a youth who runs in, half falling over the threshold, breathless, sobbing, hatless, almost exhausted.)

DICKY. For Heaven's sake, let me in here. Don't let them get me—don't—don't!

ORME (*in amazement*). Dicky—Dicky—my boy—Thank God!

DICKY. Dad! Well, I'll be—switched!

(Almost falls. ORME gathers boy in his arms and holds him up. Two powerful looking strangers enter and lay hands on DICKY. One opens coat and shows badge.)

1ST DETECTIVE. Come on, young feller. The game's up. We've got you this time, dead to rights. Might as well go without a fuss.

DICKY (*breathing hard. Shakes DETECTIVE's hand off*). Say, lay off there. You've got nothing on me, you big stiff. I don't even know what you want me for. You've got to have a license to put your hands on me!

1ST DETECTIVE. Well, we've got it, all right.

ORME. What's it all about, Dicky?

DICKY. Gee! Ask me something easy, will you, Dad? I haven't done a thing! These birds ought to be out on the breezy Western plains somewhere, riding broncho busters and popping their trusty six shooters at any one that gets in their way. That last bullet of theirs nearly started me on my way to a nice little flirtation with the angels.

MAC (*comes forward*). Who are you, men? My name is Mac Spillane, at your service,—but I'd like to know your business here.

1ST DETECTIVE (*shows badge again*). We're government men. We were sent out after this youngster. He's got a string of pearls and a diamond pin that we'd like some information about. He stole 'em.

DICKY. Stole 'em, did I? Say, you better be (*Drawls.*) j-u-s-t a l-e-e-t-l-e bit more choice in your selections from the English dictionary. I didn't steal 'em. Do you get that—and what's more, Percival—and your side partner Archibald can listen too, if his ears aren't stopped up. I haven't got those pearls—do you hear—I haven't got them, and I'd give you and little Willie each a cookie, and forget what naughty boys you've been, if you'd lead me to 'em.

2ND DETECTIVE. Ha! Listen to the poor little innocent! Sure, haven't we been watching round here for three days? Didn't we almost nab him the other night in a back yard, pinching the wash off the line? Only for the Rolls Royce buzz wagon he had, he'd have never got away.

DICKY. It's a lie, I tell you. I only just came up here on the last train. I haven't got any Rolls Royce buzz wagon. The minute you smart Alecs popped your

eyes on me you began to chase me, so I ran. I never even saw any one's clothes on the line.

MAC. No, I'm sure of that, lad, and I guess there's a mistake somewhere. Looks to me like you men were wrong this time, and ——

1ST DETECTIVE. Well, we'll take no chances, you can bet. We don't let go so easy. The kid comes with us. If he's as innocent as he'd like to make out, he can prove it to the chief.

(Lays hands on DICKY. 2ND DETECTIVE takes out handcuffs; makes great display with them. RAND comes quietly forward from rear, unnoticed by two detectives. Taps one on shoulder.)

RAND. All right, McKinnon. I'll be responsible for the boy. Suppose you and your friend wait outside.

1ST DETECTIVE. Well, for the love of Mike! *(Salutes him.)* Your Honor! Anything you say—goes! But b-e-l-i-e-v-e me! You are the last man on earth I ever expected to set my eyes on up here. Come on, Tim, if His Honor says so, out we go.

RAND. No, wait a minute, boys. Mac, you won't mind if cook gives them a bite to eat? First door on the right, McKinnon. Just tell Jinny to fill you up. *(The two start to exit.)* And McKinnon, don't call me "Your Honor." Sounds too much like the court-room.

1ST DETECTIVE. All right, I won't—Your Honor!

(Exit two DETECTIVES. The others stand about in awkward silence.)

MAC. Well, John, you seem to know more about this business than the rest of us, suppose you take charge.

RAND. I don't know a thing about it, Mac, any more than you do,—but it just happens that I've used McKinnon in a couple of my law cases, so he knows my word is good.

ORME. Well, he's pretty free with his thirty-eight calibre, I'll say. Thank Heaven he didn't hit the mark, this time.

SEMPLE. Well, go on, go on. What's it all about?

Get to the bottom of this, but for Heaven's sake, hurry up. I can still feel the goose-flesh crawling all over me.

MAC. Weel, John, since you know the law so well, suppose you unravel the mystery.

DICKY. But there is no mystery to unravel, I tell you. It's all as plain as the nose on your face (*SEMPLE feels his nose.*) I gave the pin to a girl friend of Dulcie's who was to either send it with her maid or take it herself the next morning to Dulcie's house. Well, when Dad told me that Dulcie hadn't got the pin, naturally I pelted right over to the other girl's house to find out why.

RAND. And of course, you got the pin back at once.

DICKY. No—I—didn't.

SEMPLE. Oh, ho, the plot thickens!

DICKY. No, it doesn't thicken at all. It was simply that she had gone out of town with some sick aunt or something, and didn't have a chance to do a thing about it. But she left word with the house-man to tell me that she had the pin—and her address.

RAND. And what did you do?

DICKY. Why, the only thing there was to do. I took the next train for Atlantic City to find her and get the pin.

RAND. And you got it.

DICKY. N-o—I—D-i-d-n'-t.

SEMPLE. Oh, ho—it thickens some more!

DICKY (*hotly*). Say—you—you—old—you old, funny-face—where do you get that stuff? I say it doesn't thicken—It doesn't—do you get that?

ORME. Sh! Shsh! Don't get riled up, Dicky, boy. No harm meant.

DICKY. Gad! My nerves are all jangling so, that I guess I don't know a joke from a wedding announcement.

LODGE. They're very often one and the same thing.

RAND. But tell us, my boy, why didn't you get the pin? Did you find the young lady?

DICKY. Find her! Sure I found her. In the swellest hotel in Atlantic City. And, I don't care how it sounds, for it's the truth and I'm not ashamed of it. She staked me to enough money to come up here. I hated to

borrow from a girl—but I couldn't help myself—I was dead flat busted—broke!

ORME. But why come up here? Why didn't she give you the pin and have done with it?

DICKY. Well, because, Dad, she had put the pin for safe keeping into her bag, all wrapped up in some of her silk lingerie, and the fool chauffeur that drove her uncle got her suitcase mixed with his. Her uncle was coming up to Spillane's for a nerve cure and rest—and he's got the pin!

(While DICKY is talking, SEMPLE stands transfixed with astonishment.)

SEMPLE. What! W-h-a-t! What's that you say? Atlantic City! Exchange suitcases! Say, young fellow, who the devil is this girl that you are talking about?

DICKY. Why—Rosamond Carpenter—the girl who——

SEMPLE. My niece!

LODGE. My girl!

(SEMPLE and LODGE stand and stare at each other.)

SEMPLE *(to LODGE)*. Your girl!

LODGE. Your niece! Well—I'll be ——

(He is speechless with amazement.)

ORME. Yes, yes, that's all very nice, all very fine, but we've got to find that pin.

CARL. Funny we didn't see any sign of it when we took the things out the day Mr. Semple came.

RAND. But did you take them all out?

CARL. Well, to tell the truth, I don't remember.

MAC. Weel, there's the suitcase over there in the corner, just as it first came. Semple, here, was so angry, he wouldna even have it in his bunk.

(Brings suitcase to table. SEMPLE and LODGE engage in animated conversation apart from the rest.)

RAND. You've no objection to our looking, eh, Semple?

SEMPLE. Certainly not, certainly not. Go the limit, as far as I'm concerned.

(RAND takes out one piece of lingerie after another, shaking each out carefully, until finally the pin drops out on the floor.)

DICKY. Thank Heaven! (*Picks it up and gives it to ORME.*) Now will you believe me, Dad?

ORME. Indeed I will, son, and I'll never doubt your word again. (*Opens shirt collar and takes pearls from neck.*) Here's the rest of the junk, son, and I guess we've both learned a good lesson.

DICKY. Dad! The pearls! Where did you get them?

ORME. Oh, I'll tell you all about it a little later. Let's change the subject now, and see what's happening to the rest of these folks here.

RAND. Well, Jimmy, have you made up your mind to ask that young lady now?

LODGE. I don't see how I can, sir. Not until I have a better job, anyway.

SEMPLE. He's as stubborn as a mule. I've just been telling him ——

(*Enter ABNER on the run.*)

ABNER. The telephone's ringing like mad, Mr. Mac.

MAC (*taking keys from pocket*). Weel, I'm much too interested in the goings on here to leave just now. Here, Jimmy, you run over and get the message. If I don't get rid of you in a hurry, we'll have another argument started in a minute.

(*LODGE takes keys and exits with ABNER.*)

CARL. You'll never get anywhere with Jimmy, Mr. Semple. He's as proud as Lucifer, and he'd rather die than have any one say that he married a girl for her money.

SEMPLE. But he's young yet! He'll make money! He's got the right stuff in him. Why, with my influence behind him ——

RAND. And mine!

CARL. Gee! I'm glad to hear you men say that. I'm

just tickled! It's different with me, you see. I know that there's nothing more for me, but I sure would like to see Jimmy get his reward. He deserves it.

RAND. And isn't there really anything higher up in your office that you could do, if you got the chance?

CARL. Oh, sure. Why, there are a couple of plums right in the service that pay twice as much money as I am getting, and are not half the work, but you have to be a friend of the gov —

(Enter LODGE who looks puzzled.)

LODGE. Say, Mac, there's something queer about that telephone call. Either they've got the wires crossed, or I don't understand English, but they insisted that they had it right.

SEMPLE. Well, well, what is it? What is it? Don't be so confounded long-winded about it —

(Claps LODGE on shoulder; the latter laughs.)

LODGE. Why—it was the State House on the wire. A man who says he is the Governor's private secretary wishes to say that urgent business makes it imperative that the Governor return to the city before five o'clock to-morrow. Can you make anything out of it?

(MAC looks at RAND, who nods affirmatively.)

MAC. Why yes, I think I can make a good deal out of it. Come here, John, my lad, and let me present you to these boys in your true colors. Gentlemen, Mr. John Rand Hilliard, Governor of the Commonwealth.

LODGE *(in utter astonishment and dismay)*. The Governor?

(Claps hand to his head. Others all crowd round RAND with various exclamations of congratulation. Hand-shaking, etc.)

SEMPLE. Now I know why your face looked so familiar.

CARL. Of course, only you've shaved off your mustaches, haven't you? *(RAND nods.)*

ORME. Well, well, well. And here we've been rubbing elbows with a celebrity all this time and didn't have sense enough to know it. Dicky, you're a lucky boy that he happened to be here.

DICKY. I know it. (*Holds out hand to RAND.*) And I'll never forget, sir, what you did for me.

RAND. Don't even mention it, my boy. It was little enough that I could do. I hope you'll forget the whole miserable business and never even think of it again. (*He goes to LODGE and holds out his hand.*) And now, Jimmy, my boy, if I promise to do better in the future, will you shake hands with a "big Stiff" and a "Piker," this once?

LODGE (*miserably*). Gosh! Your Excellency! I feel like a nickel multiplied by six. I don't know how you can even be willing to offer me your hand. I suppose I'm fired now good and proper; and I guess it serves me right.

RAND. Fired! Fiddlesticks! Of course you're not fired. I deserved every bit you said, for letting such conditions exist right under my very face and eyes and not finding out more about them. (*He grips LODGE's hand and then CARLETON's.*) In about two weeks (*To LODGE.*) you go and call for Miss Rosamond Carpenter some pleasant afternoon and bring her and Mrs. Carleton down to my office to see me—will you? Then I'll show you and Hal a couple of new pegs on which to hang your hats during business hours. What do you say?

LODGE. What do I say? W-e-l-l—I say, "Three cheers, boys, and all together"—One—"To the ladies."

ALL. Hooray!

LODGE. T-w-o—To "The Hut."

ALL. Hooray!

LODGE. T-h-r-e-e—To "The Governor."

ALL. H-o-o-r-a-y!

DICKY. T-i-g-e-r!

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Five males, eight females. Scene, a single interior. Costumes of the period. Plays two hours and a quarter. Beverly Bonfoey, a high type of Southern gentleman, loves Azalea, his mother's ward, but Raoul Chaudet, a Canadian adventurer, to whom he has given the hospitality of Bonfoey, steals her love. Forced to leave suddenly because of crooked money transactions, he persuades her to elope, but this is prevented by a wonderfully dramatic device. Beverly then challenges Raoul, who shows the white feather and runs away, and Beverly, to save the family honor, assumes the consequences of his swindling transactions. The untying of this knot is the plot of a strong play with a genuine Southern atmosphere written wholly from the Southern point of view. Royalty, \$20.00 for the first and \$5.00 for subsequent performances by the same cast.

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COUSIN SALLIE SELLERS, *from a neighboring estate.*

PHÆBE, *a little coquette.*

MARY ROSE, *Phæbe's sister.*

MAM' DICEY, *the house mammy.*

BEVERLY BONFOEY, *the young heir.*

JUDGE PENNYMINT, *his uncle.*

RAOUL CHAUDET, *a visitor from Quebec.*

CAMEO CLEMM, *from the city.*

UNKER SHAD, *a bit of old mahogany.*

Beaux and Belles of Dixie.

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The letter.

ACT II. The dinner party. The duel.

ACT III. An April morning, three years later. The return.

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JOHNNIE TUCKER, *known as Johnnie-Son.*

BARNABY CAMPBELL, *a big child.*

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COUSIN SALOME.

AUNT ELIZABETH.

UNCLE JEFF.

*students at
Hatton Hall School.*

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ACT III. *Scene I.* Same. Two weeks later. *Scene II.* Midnight.

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